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FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
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William R. Kintner
President

Alan Ned Sabrosky
Director

February 5, 1982

Dear Bill:

As you know, for many years I have been involved in the work of the U.S. intelligence community, even including some years with the Agency. A concern that I have carried with me for a long time is the vulnerability of good intelligence estimates to certain human frailties, most particularly the problem we all sometimes have approaching new issues with habitual insights.

We have made progress over the years and we have learned from our mistakes, but we still have a long way to go in overcoming intellectual complacency. On the road ahead, I am convinced that research institutions outside of government could play an important supplementary role in opening our eyes to a wider range of interpretations of a given development.

For that reason, I want to bring the enclosed concept paper to your attention. It points out the special utility of external input into the intelligence process, noting that outside analysts are not entrenched in "schools" of thought associated with particular positions inside the Agency. Moreover, those outside the Agency can better afford to make strikingly novel interpretations when warranted by the evidence because their jobs and reputations do not depend as heavily on being the perfect prophet. Excessive caution is sometimes the enemy of truth.

If you agree that this proposal merits serious consideration, I would be happy to come talk it over with you at your convenience.

Wishing you the very best, I remain,

Respectfully,

William R. Kintner

The Honorable William H. Casey
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

WRK:deg

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FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

CONCEPT PAPER

Quick Reaction Estimates

February 10, 1982

The U.S. intelligence community is frequently called upon to assess international threats to U.S. security interests in geographic and functional areas where analysis and forecasting are inherently difficult and often controversial. Difficulties sometimes derive from information deficiencies, but more often from strong disincentives to consider new information from novel perspectives. The hardening of assumptions may also be magnified by the dynamics of small-group interaction processes, exemplified by, but not limited to, the phenomenon of "groupthink."

The intelligence community is aware of many of the obstacles to clear-sighted analysis. Efforts have been undertaken to introduce "devil's advocate" procedures in intelligence analysis to militate against the dangers of groupthink and the pitfalls of analysts being wedded too closely to cherished and trusted assumptions. The creation of "Team A" and "Team B" to assess Soviet capabilities and intentions provides an example of such efforts bearing some fruit, but unfortunately, these procedures have not always been taken seriously enough and, for various reasons, have not provided adequate protection against these problems.

Although the information resources of the intelligence community cannot be duplicated by outside analysts, private research institutes can play an important role in independently estimating threats to U.S. security interests on the basis of open source material matched to experienced professional expertise. Such estimates can provide a significant supplement or act as a catalyst to in-house efforts.

Private research organizations, such as FPRI, offer four special advantages in this regard: First, they are not tied to particular vested bureaucratic or political interests. Second, they likewise are not tied to particular intellectual schools of thought. Third, they are professionally free of excessive concern about projective accuracy. Consequently, they are more apt to risk counterintuitive conclusions when warranted by analysis. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they are not subject to the day-to-day administrative time constraints that frequently militate against thoughtful, in-depth analysis.

The Foreign Policy Research Institue proposes to perform a series of 10 to 12 Quick Reaction Estimates over a period of 12 months for the Central Intelligence Agency. These studies will be concise (maximum 20 pages each) analyses of critical, time-sensitive issues that are designed to ameliorate the problems outlined above and thus aid intelligence analysts and managers in dealing with important, time-sensitive issues. Specificqlly, FPRI's Quick Reaction Estimates will not only provide expert analysis of the information

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available to us, but will concentrate as well as on identifying and appraising the reigning assumptions that guide ongoing intelligence estimates.

Topics selected may be functionally oriented (political, military, economic, scientific and technological) or regionally oriented (USSR, PRC, Europe, Latin American/Caribbean, Asia/Pacific, sub-Saharan Africa, or Middle East and North Africa). Essentially, four methodological approaches are contemplated: (1) basic issues analysis, (2) forecasting, (3) perceptions analysis, and (4) survey analysis. Each issue will be dealt with from a variety of relevant disciplinary perspectives--economics, geography, history, international relations, management, political science, psychology, and sociology.

Representative topics that might be addressed include:

1. Arms control strategies of the Soviet Union and strategic weapons developments, including strategic defense technologies.

2. Nuclear proliferation trends, particularly in South Asia, Northeast Asia, and the Middle East.

3. Soviet domestic economic capabilities, organization, and vulnerabilities.

4. Soviet uses of proxy forces in regional conflicts, especially Africa.

5. Sources and implications of economic and political instability in Eastern Europe.

6. Political, ethnic and economic developments in post-Tito Yugoslavia.

7. Internal and international political developments in the Middle East, particularly the Arab-Israeli arena and the Persian Gulf.

8. Palestinian social, economic, and political development in Israel, the West Bank/Gaza, and Jordan.

9. The implications of international cash-flows and financial linkages between East and West, and between the oil-producing countries and the OECD countries.

10. Internal and international political and social developments in southern Africa, particulary South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia.

It is estimated that these Quick Reaction Estimates will require a level of effort of approximately two professional-years over a period of 12 months.

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FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Foreign Policy Research Institute is a nonprofit organization devoted to scholarly research and analysis of international developments affecting the national security interests of the United States. The Institute's major activities include a highly diverse publications program; seminars, workshops, and conferences for business, government, and academic leaders; and important research projects for a wide range of government agencies.

The Institute's research and publications programs are designed to:

- Identify and explore political, military, and economic trends in the international system;
- Analyze the fundamental issues facing U.S. foreign policy;
- Suggest guidelines for U.S. foreign policy that contribute both to American security and to the development of a stable international order.

To accomplish these purposes, the Institute:

- Maintains a staff of specialists in the field of international relations as well as an extensive library of pertinent periodicals, books, and information files. The Institute's library is open to use by scholars, students, and the general public;
- Draws upon the expertise of leading academicians and persons in public life who are concerned with international affairs;
- Convenes and publishes the results of conferences and symposia of U.S. and foreign experts on contemporary international problems.

The products of the Institute's research program include the following publications:

- ORBIS: a quarterly journal of world affairs, widely recognized as a leading forum for research in the field of international and strategic studies;
- Foreign Policy Issues: a book series (in cooperation with Praeger Publishers) of important studies written by authorities in the field of international and strategic studies;
- Philadelphia Policy Papers: analyses of timely issues and developments having serious implications for U.S. foreign and defense policy;
- Research Reports: sponsored by various institutions, including agencies of the U.S. government.

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The Institute's research program consists of three core program areas: (1) the Strategic Security Program, which deals with broad strategic issues, such as grand strategy, arms control, and nuclear proliferation; (2) the Theater Security Program, which deals with regional and tactical-/operational-level military issues; and (3) the Economic Security Program, which deals with economic security matters, such as international capital flows, resource conflict, and defense economics.

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